

Madam Speaker, nearly two decades after the breakup of the U.S.S.R., Soviet-era censorship survives in places like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, which, not coincidentally, ban all political opposition.

THE U.S.-CHINA COMPETITIVENESS
AGENDA OF 2009

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to join my good friend, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN), in unveiling the bipartisan U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda of 2009. This agenda includes four legislative priorities to expand America's influence in China and increase American competitiveness in the global marketplace.

As co-chairs of the bipartisan House U.S.-China Working Group, we are working in Congress to elevate the sophistication of our debate on U.S.-China issues. The U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda provides Congress with a constructive legislative package to expand U.S. engagement with China while supporting key domestic and foreign policy objectives.

Along with two other Working Group members, Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS (D-Calif.) and Congressman STEVE ISRAEL (D-N.Y.), we are introducing bipartisan legislation to expand America's diplomatic infrastructure in China, boost support to small- and medium-sized businesses exporting to the China market, increase funds for domestic Chinese language instruction and build new cooperative energy ties between the U.S. and China.

The U.S. has one embassy and five consulates in China, leaving more than 200 cities with a population greater than one million people with little to no American representation. Additionally, while 60 percent of U.S. exports go to the Asia-Pacific market, the U.S. contributes 100 times more dollars to Europe's Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development than to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

My legislation, the U.S.-China Diplomatic Expansion Act of 2009, authorizes the construction of a new consulate in Fuzhou and 10 smaller diplomatic posts in cities with more than a million people. The bill triples funding for public diplomacy, boosts funding for a range of language, student and teacher exchange programs, increases funding for rule of law initiatives and more than triples the U.S. contribution to Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

If we are serious about expanding export promotion services, defending intellectual property rights, improving consumer product safety and enhancing economic competitiveness, we need a diplomatic infrastructure in China that reflects those priorities.

I am proud to co-sponsor three other bipartisan bills in the U.S.-China Competitiveness Agenda, including Mr. LARSEN's U.S.-China Market Engagement and Export Promotion Act of 2009, Ms. DAVIS's U.S.-Chinese Language Engagement Act of 2009 and Mr. ISRAEL's U.S.-China Energy Cooperation Act of 2009.

Mr. LARSEN's bill would help states establish export promotion offices in China and create a

new China Market Advocate program at U.S. Export Assistance Centers around the nation. The bill provides assistance to small businesses for China trade missions and authorizes grants for Chinese business education programs.

I strongly support the U.S.-China Market Engagement and Export Promotion Act because we need innovative programs that support our small business exports and arm them with the tools they need to succeed in China.

Roughly 200 million students are learning English in China today. By contrast, only about 50,000 primary and secondary school students study Chinese in America. Ms. DAVIS's bill increases Chinese cultural studies and language acquisition for elementary, high school and college-age students. Grants would be available to fund university joint venture programs, virtual cultural exchanges with Chinese schools and intensive summer language instruction programs.

We have more than just a trade deficit with China—we also have a knowledge deficit. That is why I strongly support the U.S.-Chinese Language Engagement Act. We need additional funding for domestic Chinese language programs, educational exchanges and Chinese teacher exchanges to fix this knowledge imbalance.

To create green jobs in America and fight global climate change, we must expand energy cooperation between the U.S. and China. Mr. ISRAEL's bill authorizes new grants to fund U.S.-China energy and climate change education programs, along with joint research and development of carbon capture, sequestration technology, improved energy efficiency, and renewable energy sources.

In my view, China's connections to unstable energy markets like Iran, Sudan and Venezuela could set a foreign policy collision course with the United States. I strongly support the U.S.-China Energy Cooperation Act. To protect our environment and avoid future conflict, we need creative programs to boost U.S.-China energy cooperation.

I want to thank my colleagues for their hard work on this bipartisan agenda. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor all four bills and move quickly to enact this legislation into law.

INTRODUCTION OF U.S.-CHINA
LANGUAGE ENGAGEMENT ACT
OF 2009

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the U.S.-China Language Engagement Act of 2009—a bill to close the knowledge deficit when it comes to our relationship with China.

It is little news to anyone that China is on the rise. With a population of over 1.3 billion people and the second largest economy in the world when measured by domestic purchasing power parity, China is poised to become a world power, economically, diplomatically, and militarily.

Yet at a time when China's influence on the world stage is increasing, our national understanding of the "Middle Kingdom" has not kept pace.

While an estimated 200 million Chinese school children are studying our language and culture, less than 50,000 American elementary and secondary students are studying Chinese.

The goal of the U.S.-China Language Engagement Act is to provide our schools with the resources they need to offer Chinese language instruction and cultural studies classes.

This important legislation would instruct the Department of Education to offer competitive grants to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to develop and implement innovative Chinese language and cultural studies programs.

LEAs, in collaboration with institutions of higher education, may use grant funds to carry out intensive summer Chinese language instruction, link bilingual Chinese and English speakers with students and conduct virtual cultural exchanges with educational institutions in China.

This bill is part of a broader legislative package seeking to improve our competitive edge and relationship with China.

Some may view China's resurgence as a threat. But today, Madam Speaker, I ask you to turn China's rise into an opportunity for United States citizens.

Through careful diplomacy, I believe China can become not only a competitor but also a partner. But we cannot have this dialogue if we cannot understand the Chinese people.

This is why I come before you today: to ask for your help in ensuring that the lines of communication between the United States and China stay open. Please support the U.S.-China Language Engagement Act and help bridge the language barrier and cross the cultural gap between future generations of Americans and the Chinese.

CREDIT CARDHOLDERS' BILL OF
RIGHTS ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration of the bill (H.R. 627) to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish fair and transparent practices relating to the extension of credit under an open end consumer credit plan, and for other purposes:

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 627, the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights, and would like to thank Financial Institutions Chairman LUIS GUTIERREZ and Congresswoman MALONEY for their continued dedication and leadership on this issue.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 627. Thanks to this legislation, abusive billing practices will end. No longer will a company be able to harm consumers by engaging in double-cycle billing. No longer will a company be able to harm consumers by applying their payments to the lowest-interest balance. No longer will these companies be able to harm consumers through arbitrary interest rate increases or universal default practices.

This bill also requires—as a result of an amendment I offered at markup—that the Federal Reserve conduct a study of how credit card companies are treating credit lines. Some